

- There has been a great silence on the earth today, for today our savior and king has been asleep in the tomb. Unjustly condemned and put to death on Good Friday, our Lord was buried in a borrowed tomb hewn out of rock and sealed with a large stone.
- But tonight, my friends, our Lord sleeps no longer! Tonight our Lord who died rises again, and breaking forth from the tomb of death, He says to all of us who have been dead in sin: “Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light!”
- Tonight is a night unlike any other. This is the night when God first saved our fathers: He freed the people of Israel from their slavery and led them dry-shod through the sea.
- This is the night when the pillar of fire destroyed the darkness of sin! This is the night when Christians everywhere, washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement, are restored to grace and grow together in holiness.
- This is the night when Jesus Christ broke the chains of death and rose triumphant from the grave!
- Tonight we heard the magnificent story of our salvation history. We began at the very beginning with the creation of our world. And we heard how our Lord created the light, the sky, the oceans and lands, how He created all vegetation and animals, and finally how He created us: mankind, and then rested on the 7th day.
- We heard the story of Abraham and Isaac, and of how He made a covenant with His chosen people, and how He led them out of slavery. Guided in the night by a pillar of fire, this chosen people was led through the waters of the Red Sea to freedom.
- Over the course of this past week, we have heard the story of our Lord’s covenant with His chosen people and their Passover meal they celebrated before leaving Egypt. We have recalled, too, the great Passover feast our Lord shared with His apostles at His last supper.
- But tonight, my friends, is *our* Passover feast, when Christ, the true Lamb, is slain, whose blood consecrates the homes of all believers.
- At the beginning of this Mass we followed our own pillar of fire through the darkness into the holy church, a symbol of the new and eternal Jerusalem.
- Tonight, my friends, we live in the dawning hours of the 8th day of creation. It is a day of re-creation that began when our Lord was born of the Virgin some 2000 years ago in Bethlehem, and it is the day that will bring perfection to the original 7 days of creation.
- In His death that we witnessed on Good Friday, the new and everlasting covenant between God and man was formed as Christ was both priest and victim. The disobedience of Adam in the Garden of Eden was reversed by the obedience of the new Adam: Jesus Christ!
- By passing through the waters of baptism, just as the Israelites passed through the Red Sea, we have entered into this new and eternal covenant with our Lord.
- In this august and first of sacraments we die with Christ so that we can rise with Him.
- Tonight, two of you will make this same journey through the life giving waters and join in this covenant through the Sacrament of Baptism. You’ll notice that our baptismal font has 8 sides, to remind us that it is through the font that we enter into this 8th day of new creation.
- Once you have passed through these sacred waters of rebirth, you will join 4 others and together you will be strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation in order that you may pass through the desert of this earthly life and one day pass through the veil separating Heaven and earth into the Promised Land of Heaven in the noon-day sun of this 8th day.

- As the Israelites were fed by our Lord during their years in the desert with manna, you, too, will receive the living bread that comes down from Heaven: the Eucharist, which will strengthen and sustain you on your lifelong journey and complete your full incorporation into the Body of Christ!
- Just as the Israelites of old covered the lintels of the doorways to their homes with the blood of the paschal lamb, so, too, will your lips – the entrance to the temple of your bodies – be covered with the Blood of Christ, who is Lamb of God.
- And all of this is a free gift of love from our Lord. All that is required, according St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans, is that you “must think of yourselves as being dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.”
- My dear friends in Christ, this truly is the most blessed of all nights, for it is the night chosen by God to see Christ rising from the dead!
- It is the night in which all evil is dispelled, guilt is washed away, lost innocence is restored, and in which mourners find joy. It is the night that casts out hatred, brings us peace, and humbles earthly pride. Indeed, this is the night of our very salvation.
- And so, my friends, as you prepare to approach these sacraments that will make you not simply a Catholic, but a member of Christ’s very own body, come forward to receive God’s grace and mercy with hope and deep faith in Him and in His promises.
- Live your Catholic faith with the integrity that is proper to God’s chosen people, for it is in doing so that you will find His peace and His consolation. It is in doing so that you will find salvation. A blessed Easter to you all.